

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ARA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 /057 W

-----130631 072033Z /21

R 070945Z SEP 78

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1652

INFO AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 2446

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CF, GB

SUBJECT: ALLEGED COUP ATTEMPT, BRAZZAVILLE

REF: BRAZZAVILLE 1241 AND PREVIOUS

1. DURING MEETING WITH PRES. BONGO SEPT 5 ON NAMIBIA, WHICH ALSO INCLUDED FRG AND UK AMBASSADORS AND FRENCH CHARGE, BONGO WAXED MOTE OR LESS ELOQUENT ON RECENT EVENTS IN BRAZZAVILLE AS THEY APPLIED TO GABON. HIS COMMENTS, TO SAY LEAST, WERE RAHER DISCONNECTED, AND THEREFORE MAYNOT MAY NOT MAKE SENSE IN FRAMEWORK OF WHAT DEPARTMENT AND BRAZZAVILLE ALREADY KNOW. WE REPORT THEM FOR WHAT THEY WORTH:

A. BONGO REFERRED TO DIFFERENCES OF OPINION BETWEEN YHOMBY-OPANGO AND SASSOU WITHOUT SUGGESTING THEY WERE PART OF "PLOT," AND TO NORTH-SOUTH TRIBAL DIFFERENCES, IN SUGGESTING SUCH DIFFERENCES WERE.

B. CONGOLESE EIHER SUSPECTED OR ACCUSED (WE THINK FORMER) GABON OF PERMITTING AIRCRAFT BASED IN GABON TO FLY TO NORTHERN CONGO AIRSTRIPS WITH "MERCENARIES." BONGO SAID THIS WAS ABSOLUTE NONSENSE. GABONESE HAD "INTERCEPTED"ONE FLIGHT IN BORDER REGION, WHICH WAS ALSO TRACKED BY FRANCEVILLE TOWER AND IDENTIFIED AS CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVING ZAIRIAN REGISTRATION. AIRCRAFT APPARENTLY SIMPLY LEFT BORDER AIRSPACE AFTER "INTERCEPRION." TIMING OF ALL THIS WAS NOT SPECIFIED.

C. SOMETIME SHORTLY AFTER ALLEGED COUP, PERHAPS WHEN FONMIN OBENGA REPRESENTED CONGO AT GABON'S NATIONAL DAY, CONGOLESE ASKED BONGO TO MEET WITH THEM SOMEWHERE IN NORTHERN CONGO FOR UNSPECIFIED REASONS. BONGO REFUSED TO GO, SAYING BRAZZAVILLE

EVENTS WERE NONE OF HIS AFFAIR, AND BESIDES, HE WAS IN MIDDLE
OF GABONESE NATIONAL HOLIDAYS.
D. ORIGINAL FOUR ARRESTED BY CONGOLESE WERE DEAD.

2. LATER, BONGO LAUNCHED INTO ONE OF HIS FAVORITE TOPICS --
CUBANS AND RUSSIANS, AND IT CLEAR FROM CONTEXT THAT HE ONCE AGAIN
WAS WORRIED THAT THEY WERE UP TO NO GOOD IN CONGO VIS-A-VIS
GABON, AND MOREOVER THAT HE DOUBTED THAT PROBLEM THAT LED TO
ALLEGED COUP HAD BEEN SETTLED.

3. FOR BRAZZAVILLE: WITHOUT MENTIONING BONGO AS SOURCE OR MAKING
SPECIAL EFFORT, WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANYTHING YOU MIGHT
HEAR THAT WOULD TEND TO SUPPORT OR DENY BONGO'S COMMENTS. WE
PRESUME HIS SOURCE FOR STORY OF AIRCRAFT, AT LEAST, WAS AMBAS-
SADOR MBAYE, BUT BONGO IS OFTEN CAPTIVATED BY REAL OR IMAGINED
INTELLIGENCE, AND HE MAY HAVE GOTTEN IT FROM ELSEWHERE. TIENKEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LIBREV02446
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780365-0086
Format: TEL
From: LIBREVILLE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780994/aaaaczsn.tel
Line Count: 78
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9d066956-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BRAZZAVILLE 1241
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1521415
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALLEGED COUP ATTEMPT, BRAZZAVILLE
TAGS: PINT, CF, GB
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9d066956-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014